

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**Information Bulletin #45****Disposition of Permanently Injured, Non-Releasable Wild Animals****1. Purpose**

The purpose of this nonrule policy document is to establish guidelines for permanently injured and non-releasable wild animals taken in by licensed wildlife rehabilitators. The desire is to protect wild animal populations and provide for conservation education, but also to emphasize the need to euthanize a wild animal humanely when appropriate and prevent wild animals from being kept as pets.

2. Rehabilitation of Indiana's Wildlife

Sick, injured or orphaned wild animals are captured every year by the public and given to licensed rehabilitators with the intent of releasing them back into the wild. The rehabilitation of wild animals such as white-tailed deer serves a need that satisfies the conscience of society, although scientific evidence has not proven that this is an effective tool for the management of wild animal populations. Some wild animals are unable to be released even after medical treatment due to a serious injury or an acclimation to humans. As a result, wildlife rehabilitators often keep these permanently injured or non-releasable animals under various permits, including wild animal possession and education permits.

3. Requirements of Wild Animal Rehabilitation Permits

As a condition of the rehabilitation permit, wild animals taken in for rehabilitation are to be released within 180 days. If a rehabilitator intends to possess a wild animal beyond this 180-day rehabilitation period, a conservation officer must be contacted as to the disposition. Reasonable extensions may be made to facilitate release back into the wild if approved by a conservation officer prior to elapse of the conditional timeframe (180 days). The time of year and extensive injuries are factors that will be taken into consideration for the release of the wild animals.

4. ProceduresDisposition of Permanently Injured, Non-releasable Small Mammals and Non-Migratory Game Birds

- 1) The mammal or non-migratory game bird can be retained under an educational permit. The educational permit has to be approved and issued by the Division of Fish and Wildlife for that specific mammal or non-migratory game bird and for the purpose outlined in the application.
- 2) Mammals that have been retained prior to January 1, 2004 as non-releasable under a rehabilitation permit can continue to be possessed, but only under a valid wild animal possession permit. The wild animal possession permit can be obtained after making application that includes a successfully completed inspection by a conservation officer and approval from the Division of Fish and Wildlife.
- 3) The mammal or non-migratory game bird that is deemed non-releasable and does not fall under categories one and two listed above should be euthanized. It is the responsibility of the rehabilitator to cause it to be euthanized.

Disposition of Permanently Injured, Non-releasable White-Tailed Deer

- 1) All white-tailed deer taken in by a rehabilitator and deemed non-releasable must be euthanized. It is the responsibility of the rehabilitator to cause the animal to be euthanized.
- 2) Injured or orphaned white-tailed deer may be given to licensed wild animal rehabilitators, but must be released within 180 days or euthanized. Orphaned or rehabilitated white-tailed deer may not be sold or given to licensed Indiana game breeders.
- 3) Non-releasable white-tailed deer transferred from a rehabilitation permit to a valid game breeder license with authorization from a conservation officer prior to January 1, 2004 can still be possessed under the game breeder license.
- 4) White-tailed deer that are unlawfully possessed will be euthanized.

Disposition of Permanently Injured, Non-releasable Reptiles and Amphibians

- 1) The reptile or amphibian can be retained under an educational permit. The educational permit has to be approved and issued by the Division of Fish and Wildlife for that specific reptile or amphibian and the purpose outlined in the application.
- 2) As of January 1, 2005, turtles that are non-releasable or obtained from owners who no longer want to possess them may be retained (possessed) under a valid special purpose turtle possession permit. The special purpose turtle possession permit can be obtained after making application that includes a successfully completed inspection by a conservation officer and approval from the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Turtles possessed under this permit cannot be released into the wild.
- 3) The reptile or amphibian should be euthanized. It is the responsibility of the rehabilitator to cause it to be euthanized.